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# Kenya

# Biotechnology

# Kenya Biotechnology Report

# 2005

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**Report Highlights:**
Though Kenya does not produce any commercial crops that involve transgenic process, it is in the process of developing an official policy to govern trade and production of genetically modified organisms. It is also one of the most progressive countries in sub-Saharan Africa regarding GMO development.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Annual Report
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## 1. Executive Summary

Kenya is in the process of developing its biotechnology policy. A draft bill is under review, however, procedures for dealing with transgenic materials are currently determined by a set of guidelines. Though commercial production is not taking place, two research stations are in operation and field trials are underway.

Most of the transgenic products exported to Kenya in 2004 were in the form of food aid. Kenya is one of the most progressive countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in developing transgenic agricultural products and should reap substantial benefits in terms of meeting food security needs and in trade provided its final policy is not overly trade restrictive.

## 11. Biotechnology Trade and Promotion

Kenya does not produce any commercial crops that involve transgenic processes, but does produce some using tissue culture techniques. Biotech activities in Kenya include tissue culture, molecular or genetic markers, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), biosafety and biopolicy. Examples of GM crops undergoing evaluation include Bt maize (confined field trials), viral resistant transgenic sweet potato, cassava resistant to the cassava mosaic virus, and Bt cotton (which has gone through one season of confined field trial). It is hoped that in the next decade Kenya will commercialize some of these transgenic products.

The U.S. exported transgenic products to Kenya in 2004. These include shipments under the McGovern Dole Food for Education Program, USAID food aid programs (Title 11, Food for Progress). The products are soybean/products and corn/products.

## 111. Biotechnology Policy

In 1998, the National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) developed the guidelines for biosafety in biotechnology. The NCST through the National Biosafety Committee (NBC) is the coordinating office on all issues related to biosafety. Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) in the Ministry of Agriculture has the mandate for developing and implementing the national policy on the introduction, testing and use of GM plants, microorganisms and biopesticides in Kenya. The Ministry of Health regulates Food Safety issues. The Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries regulates the veterinary drugs and related issues. The National Environment Authority in the Ministry of Environment overseas the regulatory role of biosafety issues relating to the National Environment and Management Authority (NEMA) and the Pest and Product Board regulates biopestcides.

Several workshops to deliberate on issues relating to development of an appropriate biopolicy and biosafety framework have been held. The discussions are wide ranging from importance of GM crops in Kenya, GM food for human health and nutrition, discussion of the draft for biotechnology and biosafety policy for Kenya, and development of biotechnology and biosafety policy in the ASERACA and COMESA countries and biotechnology trade issues. Research institutions, universities and other stake holders have programs that focus on research and technology development, strengthening public institutions to use research and public outreach to promote biotechnology's safe use, and developing local private sectors to help integrate biotech into local food systems. Kenya has a draft policy Bill and a draft biotechnology policy document prepared.

NCST in collaboration with other stakeholders initiated and enhanced the development of biotechnology policy and Biosafety legal framework to regulate the sustainable development of biotechnology in Kenya. A draft Biotech Bill and draft biotechnology policy have been presented to the Minister of Education Science and Technology. Further action on the Bill requires its presentation to the cabinet by the Attorney General for discussion and approval for publication. This process is likely to take place within the coming year. This expected time frame is subject to change.

Kenya is a food aid recipient country, the most recent instance being food aid for the drought appeal made by the president of Kenya (2004) and the food for education initiative. There are no serious indications that the GOK may implement policies restricting the use of bioengineered commodities in food aid programs. Kenya is in the process of developing its own transgenic products and is increasingly understanding the benefits of agricultural biotechnology such as increased crop yields, reduced need for water and chemical materials and higher resistance to crop stress, pests and diseases (food security concerns).

## IV. Marketing Issues

U.S. agricultural and food exports over the last five calendar years average $ 32.2 million with over 80 percent being food aid and monetized shipments under Food for Progress, Title II, P.L. 480 and/or Section 416 (b). The most important being corn and vegetable oils (have transgenic content). Kenyan importers, retailers and consumers have not expressed serious concerns about importation, sale or use of transgenic products.

## V. Capacity Building and Outreach

Under the Cochran Fellowship Program the following participants have been trained between 2003 to date.

### Cochran Fellowships from Kenya related to Biotechnology

- May 4-16, 2003: Agricultural Biotechnology Short Course
  13 Cochran Participants
- July 11–16, 2004: Capacity Building Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and technology transfer
  3 Cochran Participants
- June 30 – July 16, 2005: Cochran Training in Policy Development.
  3 Cochran Participants
- Biotech Speaker Programs sponsored by Public Affairs Section
  2002, 2003, 2004
- USAID sponsored Programs in Kenya

**The country needs include assistance in enhancement of Biosafety Bill for Kenya.**

## VI: Reference Material

There are no transgenic products approved